CHRISTIANITY MAY BE CHINA'S NEED

The Old Faiths are Likely to be Discarded for the Religion of the West

GREAT GOOD MAY COME FROM PRESENT CRISIS

The Chinese Christian Church of The Future Will Be Different In Form From Western Denominations—They Cannot Understand Why There Should Be a Southern Methodist Church and An English Baptist Church.

(By The Religious Rambler.)

Amid the uncertainties of the present Chinese situation only one thing is sure, and that is, that reform will win no matter which party comes out on top. New China will be a westernized China. Now the startling probability arises that new China may be officially a Christian nation. This is the proposition of some of the young leaders, as well as of some of the high Peking officials.

All of China is eager to take on the western ways. Newspapers, the telegraph and telephone, and postal system, railways, street cars, automobiles and bicycles—all these are now welcomed. Queues are being cut; foreign style clothes, which means European dress, are being adopted by the progressives. There is real reason to believe that a clear break with the old faiths of Buddhism and Taoism may be made, at least so far as this can be done by governmental action. In their stead, if the numerous Christians among the reformers have their way, Christianity may be proclaimed as the state religion.

Old China and The New Faith.

Even if the revolution had not broken out, it is extremely likely that the Peking cabinet would have proposed this reform for itself. Less than six months ago, His Excellency, Chow Tze Chi, one of the high officials in Peking, declared "Buddhism and Taoism are practically dead. The time has come for China to adopt a new national religion. The people need the restraint and stimulus of a spiritual force to keep them steady during this transition period; so that they may not run off into materialism and anarchy, as in Japan. I favor adopting Christianity as the national religion. It is the religion of democracies."

This official was not himself a Christian. Nor was he of the school which bids for western favor by polite utterance. He represented that group of far-sighted statesmen who observe that China needs the conserving and inspiring power of a vital religion, even more than she needs the appliances of the Occident.

Confucianism Not a Religion.

This same man went on to say that Confucianism is not a religion, and that there is nothing inconsistent with Confucianism in the adoption of Christianity. Contrary to the popular impression, this is quite true and the belief of many missionaries. The one sticking point is what interpretation shall be placed upon the Confucian teaching of reverence for ancestors. Some missionaries say that reverence for ancestors does not necessarily imply, worship of ancestors. They would adopt the Chinese philosophy in this respect as a real interpretation of Christianity's teaching.

Certain of the older school of Chinese statesmen, like Chang Chih Tung, insisted that Confucianism was a religion and should be China's only religion. As a matter of fact, Confucious himself disclaimed any intention of founding a religion. His was a system of ethics which may be entirely supplemental to Christianity Therefore, to adopt the faith of the West would not necessarily mean to surrender the philosophy which has shaped China's thought and life for more than two thousand years.

A Crisis for Missions.

American and British leaders in missionary activity are beginning to talk about vast readjustments as a consequence of the present revolution. They see in the unsettled state of the country, and in the practical stoppage of mission work in all the interior of China, an opportunity for the re-alignment of the missionary forces, and an entire reconsideration of the whole question of Chinese missions.

Most of the missionaries have been summoned by their consuls down to the coast and to the port cities on the Yangtze. Free from their accustomed labors, and with no such tragedies to engross them as those which disorganized the missionary body in 1900, the missionaries are able to observe that "all things are made new;" and that the time has come for the taking up in the new of the whole problem of China and missions. The questions of union in medical and educational work; of apportionment of fields; of relation to unoccupied territory; of the overcrowding of missionary work in the port cities, may all be surveyed in the new, and practical by a fresh start made on a newer, broader scale that will command the attention of the nation.

There should be issued an address to the Chinese people, setting forth the claims of Christianity upon China, and its entire adaptability to the Chinese character and nation. A representative body, authorized to speak for all the Chinese missions, to the public and to the government and to the outside world, is one of tht serious needs th.t is likely to be met ae the present time.

A New Chinese Church.

The spirit of nationalism, which is responsible for the present revolution, has existed in China for nearly a decade, and is responsible for the present existence of an independent Chinese church. Missionaries and other observers are saying that it is becoming clearer every day that the form Christianity will take in China is not that of the western churches, although all the essentials of the Christian faith will be held. The feeling against the perpetuation of the historic denominational divisions of America and Europe in China, is steadily growing.

The absurdity of it all is apparent by such illustrations as a speaker upon China used recently: "When a member of the Southern Presbyterian Church from North China meets a member of the Northern Presbyterian Church from South China—both being yellow men and neither having heard of the American Civil War—they have considerable difficulty in explaining to each other their denominational differences." From the Chinese standpoint, it is the height of unreason to try to impose upon China a Northern Methodist Church and a Southern Methodist Church, an English Baptist Church and an American Baptist Church, a Church of England and an American Protestant Episcopal Church; not to mention a score of the other smaller divisions into which western Christianity has been broken up.

With their pre-eminent practical sense, the Chinese will unquestionably solve the situation by making one Chinese church. At the Edinburgh Conference, it was said that there would be only one Christian church in China today if the missionaries did not stand in the way of this. Now, the sagest of the mission counsellors think the time has come to anticipate the inevitable, by creating a substantially united and aggressive Chinese Christian organization, equipped to meet the present crisis.

First Omaha man (in surprise)—What! Back already? Why, I thought you were going to see Europe? Second Omaha man (cheerfully)—So did I, but it seems that New York saw me first."—Puck.

Half Hour Portraits of Dickens' Greatest Character

(Continued from page eleven.)

prison of La Force the instant the gates of Paris closed behind him.

La Force took him in and swallowed him down. He could see no one, send for no one, speak to no one, write to no one. La Force erased him from the living world before he was dead.

Yet love found him there. His wife Lucie followed him to Paris with her father, whose fame as an old Bastile prisoner opened the way for them. In that emotional time, Dr. Manette's arrival in Paris was as the arrival of a hero. Men and women who had killed and burned and destroyed like raving beasts scarcely half an hour before, reached out with their bloody hands to touch his, and cried like children at the tale of his sufferings. Dr. Manette blessed his old pain, for it opened even the gates of La Force for him; and when at last St. Evremonde was led out to trial, again his connectiton with Dr. Manette changed the watchful passion-drunken mob that waited at those trials only with one emotion—that of jealousy lest the guillotine be cheated. Instead of demanding St. Evremonde's head, they demanded his release and that of his agent, and bore him to his wife in a mad, screaming procession above which tossed thousands of red caps waved aloft on pikes.

But they seized him again, almost within the hour. A word had gone through the streets of Paris—a word about Evremonde. It had made eye seek eye in the very crowd that had borne him home. Each eye had a meaning, determined look; and the look said "Death!"

He had been denounced as one of a race proscribed for infamous oppression. And when Dr. Manette tried in court to aid him again, he was confronted with the statement that he, himself, had denounced the prisoner.

In the roar of thirsty, lusting rage that followed, his denial passed unheard. Then suddenly a tense silence fell on the crowd and a man produced a paper, wrinkled, yellow, with the ink dim on it. It was a paper he had found in a secret cell when he had helped sack the Bastile.

That cell was the cell that had been occupied by Dr. Manette for eighteen years. That paper was the story written by Dr. Manette and hidden by him. It was written in the tenth year of his agony.

It told how he had attended two dying people, a woman and a man. The woman had been wronged by a great nobleman and had gone mad. The man, her brother, was dying from a sword-thrust administered by the one who had wronged his sister. The next night, continued Dr. Manette's paper, he was seized, identified by the nobleman, and carried to the Bastile. From that night he never heard of the outer world again, never knew whether his young wife and child were dead or alive. And in his unbearable anguish he denounced his torturer's race to Heaven and to earth.

A terrible sound arose when the reading of this paper was done. There was not a head in the nation but must have fallen before it. The prisoner knew that he was doomed; for the name of the race that Dr. Manette had thus denounced was St. Evremonde.

At every juryman's voice as he announced his verdict, there was a howl that was like nothing in the world but a howl of a great cat leaping on prey. Unanimously Voted! Back to the Conciergerie, and Death within Twenty-four Hours!

Issuing from an obscure corner from which he had never moved during the trial, Sydney Carton sprang to Lucie Manette's side and supported her as she fainted. His arm trembled when he raised her. He carried her lightly to the door, followed by her father and Mr. Lorry, who had arrived in Paris on business almost at the same time as St. Evremonde.

Carton carried Lucie upstairs in their lodgings and laid her on the couch. Little Lucie ran to him and clung to his neck. He pressed her blooming cheek against his face. Then he put her gently from him, and looked down on the unconscious mother.

"Before I go," he said, and paused, looking at the two old men, "may I kiss her?"

When he bent down, he murmured a few words. The child heard them, and often told her grandchildren, when she herself was a handsome old lady, that his words were: 'A life you love."

He passed into the next room and there told Mr. Lorry that he had hurried to Paris to see if he could be of any use. He had been able, so far, to do only one thing. He had met, by chance, one of the turnkeys at the Conciergerie, and had recognized the man as a former English government spy. Threatening him with exposure—a deadly threat in those days of wholesale denunciation—he had succeeded in making arrangements to gain access to the prisoner—only once, and only for a few moments. It was not much, said Carton.

"No," said Mr. Lorry, drying his eyes. "He must perish. There is no hope."

"Yes. He will perish. There is no hope," replied Carton, and walked with a settled step downstairs.

He did not tell Mr. Lorry that he had stopped at a chemist's shop and that, at that moment, he had in his breast pocket some powders that the chemist had given to him with hesitation, and only after grave warning.

He presented himself before Mr. Lorry again in the morning—the morning of the day that was to see St. Evremonde die.

"Mr. Lorry," said he, "I have information that Dr. Manette and his daughter are to be denounced. You have money and can buy the means of traveling to the coast as quickly as the journey can be made. Have your horses ready so that they may be in starting trim by two o'clock in the afternoon!"

Mr. Lorry nodded.

"For the sake of her child and her father, press upon her the necessity of leaving Paris with them at once. Otherwise, she would lay her head beside her husband's unshrinkingly. Have all arrangements made, even to the taking of your own seat in the carriage. Wait then, for me. The moment I come to you, drive away! Wait for nothing, except to have my place occupied! Promise me solemnly that nothing shall influence you to alter this course!"

"Nothing, Carton!" said Mr. Lorry, wondering.

"Here is her father's passport," said Carton, "made out for himself, her and the child. You have your own. Here is mine—Sydney Carton, Englishman. Keep it for me till I come."

He said "good bye" with a grave smile of earnestness and walked away. For a moment he paused on the street, looking up at the window of her room.

Then he sought the turnkey, and spoke to him long and secretly. The man stared at him, amazed. "You see!" said Carton, "If I denounce you, it will be the axe. Do this for me, and your hazard is nothing."

"My hazard is nothin," said the turnkey, "if you are true to the whole of your bargain."

"Don't fear me," answered Carton. "I will be true."

A key was turned in the door of Evremonde's cell. The condemned man turned and saw the face, quiet, intent, lit with a smile, of Sydney Carton.

They pressed each other's hands. Then swiftly, with a strength of will and action that carried the prisoner quite away and made him obey helplessly, Carton pushed Evremonde to the table and made him write. "Write what I shall dictate!" he commanded. "Quick, friend, quick!"

Putting his hand to his bewildered head, the prisoner took up his pen. Carton, with his right hand in his breast, stood close beside him.

"If you remember," dictated he, "the words that passed between us long ago, you will comprehend this when you see it. You do remember them, I know."

He was drawing his hand from his breast. The prisoner chanced to look up. Carton's hand stopped, closing on something.

"Is that a weapon in your hand?" asked Evremonde.

"No! Write on. 'I am thankful that the time has come when I can prove them. That I do so is no subject for regret or grief.'"

As he said these words, with his eyes on Evremonde, his hand moved softly and slowly to the prisoner's face. The pen dropped from his hand, and he looked about him vacantly. "What vapor is that?" asked he.

"Take up the pen and finish!" said Carton. "Hurry! Hurry!"

Again his hand stole softly and watchfully down. He dictated a few more words, his hand was at the prisoner's face, and the pen trailed off into unintelligible signs.

Carton's hand stayed at Evremonde's nostrils. The prisoner sprang up with a reproachful look, but the hand was firm and close. Within a minute he was stretched senseless on the ground.

With desperate swiftness, yet with hands true and steady, losing not a second, Carton exchanged clothes with Evremonde, even to the hair ribbons. Then he called softly: "Enter there! Come in!" The spy presented himself.

"You see?" said Carton. "Now get me—him—to the coach. I was weak and faint when you brought me in. The parting interview has overpowered me. Your life is in your own hands! Quick! Call assistance! Take him yourself to Mr. Lorry, tell him yourself to give him no restorative but air, and to remember my words of last night, and his promise of last night, and to drive away!"

"So afflicted to find that his friend has drawn a prize in the lottery of Sainte Guillotine?" said one of the men with whom the spy returned. They picked up the unconscious figure and carried it away.

Left alone, Carton listened with beating heart for any sound that might denote suspicion or discovery. None came. But presently there came sounds that he did not fear, for he knew what they meant. Cell doors were being opened in succession, and finally his own, and a keeper looked in and ordered him to follow.

He was led into a large dark room, darkened still more by the dark winter's day that was drawing to its early close. There were many figures in the shadows, some pacing restlessly, some weeping and some quite still. And ever and again the door opened and more came in. Fifty-two were to die that afternoon.

Suddenly, he was frightened with fear of discovery. A young woman stepped up to him and said: "Citizen Evremonde, I was with you in La Force. I heard you were released. I hoped it was true."

"It was," he answered. "But I was taken again."

"If I should be put to ride with you," said she, "will you let me hold your hand? It will give me more courage."

The patient eyes were lifted to his face, and he saw them widen with doubt, then astonishment. He pressed her cold fingers and touched his lips.

"Are you dying for him?" she whispered.

"And his wife and children. Hush! Yes!"

"Oh, you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger?"

"Hush! Yes, my poor sister, to the last."

It is time. The prisoners are bound and led to the tumbrils. There are six tumbrils. In the late afternoon's ghostly light they roll toward the place of execution.

The horsemen abreast of the third tumbril often point out one man with their swords. There is great curiosity to know which is he. He stands at the back of the tumbril with his head bent down to converse with a young girl and has her hand in his.

Here and there, cries are raised against him. If they move him at all, it is only to a quiet smile, as he shakes his hair a little more loosely about his face. He cannot easily touch it, his arms being tied in front of him.

The ministers of Sainte Guillotine are robed and ready. The tumbrils discharge their loads. In front, seated on chairs as in a garden of public diversion, are many women, busily knitting.

Crash! A head is held up, and the knitting women, who scarcely lifted their eyes to look at it a moment ago when it could think and speak, count One.

The second tumbril empties and moves on; the third comes up.

The one who is supposed to be Evremonde descends, and the girl is lifted out after him. He places her gently with her back to the crashing engine that constantly whirs up and falls, and she thanks him: "I think you were sent to me by Heaven."

"Or you to me," says Sydney Carton. "Keep your eyes on me, and mind no other object."

"I mind nothing while I hold your hand. I shall mind nothing when I let it go, if they are rapid."

"They will be rapid. Fear not!"

The two stand in the fast-thinning throng of victims, but they speak as if they were all alone.

"Am I to kiss you now? Is the moment come?"

"Yes."

She kisses his lips; he kisses hers; they solemnly bless each other. The little hand does not tremble as he releases it. She goes next before him—is gone. The knitting women count Twenty-two.

The murmuring of many voices, the upturning of many faces, the pressing on of many footsteps in the outskirts of the crowd so that it swells forward in a mass, like one great heave of water, all flash away. Twenty-three.

Title of next Sunday's article: Dickens' Most Sunny Character: Mark Tapley.